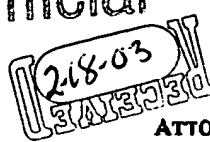


Official



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PATENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Please cancel Claims 1-7, 9-10 and 13-20, without prejudice.

Please amend Claims 8, 11 and 12.

Please add new Claims 21-29.

Claims 1 - 7 (Cancelled).

- 1 8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22 [3] wherein the connection request contains
2 zero or more identifiers identifying domains through which the connection route has already passed,
3 the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain
4 indicated by the identifiers in the connection request, and the step of randomly selecting a second
5 gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers in the connection
6 request.

Claims 9 - 10 (Cancelled).

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1 11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 [6] wherein the connection request contains
2 zero or more identifiers identifying domains through which the connection route has already passed,
3 the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain
4 indicated by the identifiers in the connection request, and the step of randomly selecting a second
5 gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers in the connection
6 request.

1 12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24 [7] wherein the connection request contains
2 zero or more identifiers identifying domains through which the connection route has already passed,
3 the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain
4 indicated by the identifiers in the connection request, and the step of randomly selecting a second
5 gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers in the connection
6 request.

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Please add new claims 21-29 as follows:

1 **21. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 2) A method for a node to select a gateway from**
2 **among at least two gateways, comprising the steps of:**

3 **storing information associating a metric with each gateway with respect to each of one or**
4 **more destinations;**

5 **upon receiving a connection request to a destination, the further steps of:**

6 **i) deterministically selecting a first gateway having an optimum metric with**
7 **respect to the destination,**

8 **ii) sending a connection request to the first gateway,**

9 **iii) if a connection can not be established to the destination via the first gateway,**
10 **randomly selecting a second gateway from among the gateways other than the first gateway, and**

11 **iv) sending a connection request to the second gateway; and**

12 **wherein the connection request contains zero or more identifiers identifying domains through**
13 **which the connection route has already passed, the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway**
14 **does not select a gateway leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers in the connection request,**
15 **and the step of randomly selecting a second gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain**
16 **indicated by the identifiers in the connection request.**

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1 22. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 3) A method for a node to select a gateway from
2 among at least two gateways, comprising the steps of:

3 storing information associating a metric with each gateway with respect to each of one or
4 more destinations;

5 upon receiving a connection request to a destination, the further steps of:

6 i) deterministically selecting a first gateway having an optimum metric with
7 respect to the destination,

8 ii) sending a connection request to the first gateway,

9 iii) if a connection can not be established to the destination via the first gateway,
10 randomly selecting a second gateway from among the gateways other than the first gateway, and

11 iv) sending a connection request to the second gateway; and

12 wherein if more than one gateway have the optimum metric with respect to the destination,
13 the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway randomly selects the first gateway from among
14 the gateways having the optimum metric.

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23. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 6) A method for a node to select a gateway from among at least two gateways, comprising the steps of:

storing information associating a metric with each gateway with respect to each of one or more destinations;

upon receiving a connection request to a destination, the further steps of:

i) deterministically selecting a first gateway having an optimum metric with respect to the destination,

ii) sending a connection request to the first gateway,

iii) if a connection can not be established to the destination via the first gateway, randomly selecting a second gateway from among the gateways other than the first gateway, and

iv) sending a connection request to the second gateway; and

wherein the step of randomly selecting a second gateway is repeated if a connection can not be established via the second gateway first selected randomly, and the selection is limited to the gateways through which a connection has not already been attempted.

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1 24. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 7) A method for a node to select a gateway from
2 among at least two gateways, comprising the steps of:

3 storing information associating a metric with each gateway with respect to each of one or
4 more destinations;

5 upon receiving a connection request to a destination, the further steps of:

6 i) deterministically selecting a first gateway having an optimum metric with
7 respect to the destination,

8 ii) sending a connection request to the first gateway,

9 iii) if a connection can not be established to the destination via the first gateway,
10 randomly selecting a second gateway from among the gateways other than the first gateway, and

11 iv) sending a connection request to the second gateway; and

12 wherein the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway is repeated if a connection can
13 not be established via the first gateway first selected deterministically, and the selection is limited
14 to the gateways through which a connection has not already been attempted.

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1 25. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 9) A method for a node to select a gateway from
2 among at least two gateways, comprising the steps of:

3 storing information associating a metric with each gateway with respect to each of one or
4 more destinations;

5 upon receiving a connection request to a destination, the further steps of:

6 i) deterministically selecting a first gateway having an optimum metric with
7 respect to the destination,

8 ii) sending a connection request to the first gateway,

9 iii) if a connection can not be established to the destination via the first gateway,
10 randomly selecting a second gateway from among the gateways other than the first gateway, and

11 iv) sending a connection request to the second gateway;

12 wherein the step of randomly selecting a second gateway applies a weighting factor to each
13 gateway, the weighting factor taking into account the metric of each gateway with respect to the
14 destination; and

15 wherein the connection request contains zero or more identifiers identifying domains through
16 which the connection route has already passed, the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway
17 does not select a gateway leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers in the connection request,
18 and the step of randomly selecting a second gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain
19 indicated by the identifiers in the connection request.

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1 26. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 10) A method for a node to select a gateway from
2 among at least two gateways, comprising the steps of:

3 storing information associating a metric with each gateway with respect to each of one or
4 more destinations;

5 upon receiving a connection request to a destination, the further steps of:

6 i) deterministically selecting a first gateway having an optimum metric with
7 respect to the destination,

8 ii) sending a connection request to the first gateway,

9 iii) if a connection can not be established to the destination via the first gateway,
10 randomly selecting a second gateway from among the gateways other than the first gateway, and

11 iv) sending a connection request to the second gateway;

12 wherein the step of randomly selecting a second gateway is further limited to the gateways
13 whose metric with respect to the destination is within a preset range; and

14 wherein the connection request contains zero or more identifiers identifying domains through
15 which the connection route has already passed, the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway
16 does not select a gateway leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers in the connection request,
17 and the step of randomly selecting a second gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain
18 indicated by the identifiers in the connection request.

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1 27. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 15) A method for a node to select a gateway from
2 among at least two gateways, comprising the steps of:

3 storing information associating a metric with each gateway with respect to each of one or
4 more destinations;

5 upon receiving a connection request to a destination, the further steps of:

6 i) deterministically selecting a first gateway having an optimum metric with
7 respect to the destination,

8 ii) sending a connection request to the first gateway,

9 iii) if a connection can not be established to the destination via the first gateway,
10 randomly selecting a second gateway from among the gateways other than the first gateway, and

11 iv) sending a connection request to the second gateway; and

12 wherein the metric represents an approximation to the number of domains through which the
13 connection route would pass in reaching the destination with which the metric is associated through
14 the gateway with which the metric is associated.

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1 28. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 17) In a communication network containing a
2 plurality of domains, electronic hardware for use in a node in a domain, the electronic hardware
3 containing circuitry for carrying out steps to select a gateway, the domain having at least two
4 gateways, the node having stored information associating a metric with each gateway with respect
5 to each of one or more destinations, and the steps comprising the steps of:

6 deterministically selecting a first gateway having an optimum metric with respect to a
7 destination,

8 sending a connection request to the first gateway,

9 if a connection can not be established to the destination via the first gateway, randomly
10 selecting a second gateway from among the gateways other than the first gateway, and

11 sending a connection request to the second gateway; and

12 wherein the circuitry selects a gateway upon receiving a connection request, the connection
13 request containing zero or more identifiers identifying domains through which the connection route
14 has already passed, the step of deterministically selecting a first gateway does not select a gateway
15 leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers in the connection request, and the step of randomly
16 selecting a second gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers
17 in the connection request.

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1 29. (Re-presented - formerly dependent Claim 19) A node comprising:

2 memory for storing information associating a metric with each of one or more gateways with
3 respect to each of one or more destinations reachable through the respective gateways;

4 means for launching a connection request to a selected gateway;

5 means for selecting the selected gateway which deterministically selects a first gateway
6 having an optimum metric with respect to a destination, and if a connection can not be established
7 to the destination via the first gateway, randomly selects a second gateway from among the gateways
8 other than the first gateway; and

9 wherein the means for selecting the selected gateway selects a first gateway upon receiving
10 a connection request, the connection request containing zero or more identifiers identifying domains
11 through which the connection route has already passed, and the means for selecting the selected
12 gateway does not select a gateway leading to a domain indicated by the identifiers in the connection
13 request.